

Digital Projects for the Public: Instructions for Preparing a Prototyping Grant Application

Expected Outcome: A working prototype that demonstrates the main humanities ideas and the details of the project's technology accompanied by an outreach plan to engage a wide public audience.

- ☐ **Verify your institution's registration or register your institution with Grants.gov.** Complete at least four weeks before the deadline.
- ☐ **Download the application package from Grants.gov.** The [program resource page](#) on NEH's website has a direct link to the package. You can also search Grants.gov for this program. The program resource page has a direct link to the instructions for completing the package.
- ☐ **Complete the application using the following guidelines.** The narrative should not assume specialized knowledge, and it should be free of jargon. It should clearly define technical terms so that they are comprehensible to a nonspecialist audience. NB: For a Production application, a separate Design Document (Attachment 8) is required.
 - ☐ **1) Table of Contents**
List all parts of the application with corresponding page numbers.
 - ☐ **2) Application Narrative (up to fifteen single-spaced pages)**
The narrative should contain the following, in this order.
 - A) *Nature of the request* (one or two paragraphs):
 - Provide a brief overview of the project, its intended goals and outcomes, its format, and the amount of funding requested.
 - B) *Humanities content*:
 - Discuss the significant humanities ideas, themes, and scholarship on which the project is based.
 - If applicable, explain how your project would differ from existing projects that explore similar subject matter.
 - Describe the project's most important resources, including audio and visual materials, documents, and other archival artifacts.
 - C) *Project format*:
 - Briefly describe the project's format(s) and design(s). You will have an opportunity to provide a detailed description of the project in the Design Document. (See below.)
 - Explain how the format would convey the project's central humanities ideas.
 - If there are successful models for this type of approach, please briefly discuss them here.
 - If the project would employ a transmedia approach, explain how each of the different components will interact with and complement one another to expand the audience's knowledge of the subject.

D) *Audience and distribution:*

- Describe distribution and marketing plans for the project, including targeted audiences for the project.

E) *Project evaluation:*

- Discuss how you will evaluate the user experience, particularly how effectively the prototype conveys the humanities content to users.
- Explain how you plan to test, troubleshoot, and de-bug the project.

F) *Rights, permissions, and licensing:*

- Explain who controls the rights to the materials and technologies being used.
- Describe licensing costs or developer fees.

G) *Humanities advisers:*

- Identify the project's humanities advisers and describe their likely contributions to the project's content.

H) *Production team:*

- Provide information about the principal members of the production team and their contributions to the project.

I) *State of the project:*

- Discuss the project's history and the work that has been accomplished to date.

J) *Work plan:*

- Provide a detailed, month-by-month schedule of the major work to be done during the prototyping phase, including meetings among advisers and designers, and the personnel assigned to accomplish these tasks.

K) *Organization profile:*

Describe briefly the applicant institution and, if different, the production organization(s).

L) *Fundraising plan:*

- Specify the source and amount of all funds raised to date for all aspects of the project.
- Include information about any previous NEH grants, as well as support from other sources. If applicable, identify institutional resources, research facilities, or other significant "in-kind" support.
- Provide specific plans for raising funds from outside sources to cover the costs that will exceed NEH support.

☐ 3) Bibliography

Provide a bibliography of the humanities scholarship that significantly informs the project (up to two single-spaced pages). This bibliography should include any special collections or libraries in which archival material for the project has been identified.

☐ 4) Résumés and letters of commitment

Include résumés (of up to two pages) for and letters of commitment from each of the humanities advisers and the key persons on the digital media team. Also include letters of commitment from all participating organizations.

☐ 5) Description of a work sample

All applicants must submit a work sample by the project team that best represents the approach and format of the project under review. You may include a description of the work sample and an explanation of its relevance in this section. Ideally, this work sample will be included as a URL. If necessary, provide instructions for accessing the sample. If you are submitting your sample on a disk, please submit eight copies, following the instructions in the “How to Submit Samples (and, for Production Applications, Prototypes)” section of the guidelines.

☐ 6) Budget form

Using the instructions and the sample budget, complete the budget form (MS Excel format) or a format of your own that includes all the required information. (You can find links to the budget instructions, sample budget, and budget form on the [program resource page](#).)

Please identify all key project personnel by name on the budget form, and note the number of days that each of them will contribute to the project. Indicate in the budget if any of these individuals will perform different and separately budgeted functions.

If the applicant institution has a federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement and is claiming indirect costs, submit a copy of its agreement. Do not attach the agreement to your budget form. Instead you must attach it to the Budget Narrative Attachment Form (also known as the Budget Narrative File). (See the instructions for this form in the Application Checklist at the end of the main Digital Projects for the Public guidelines document.) Alternatively, you must attach a statement to the form, explaining a) that the applicant institution is not claiming indirect costs; b) that the applicant institution does not currently have a federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement; c) that the applicant institution is a sponsorship (umbrella) organization, which will charge an administrative fee of 5 percent of the total direct costs; or d) that the applicant institution is using the government-wide rate of up to 10 percent of the total direct costs, less distorting items (including but not limited to capital expenditures, participant stipends, fellowships, and the portion of each subgrant or subcontract in excess of \$25,000).

Indirect costs are computed by applying a negotiated indirect-cost rate to a distribution base (typically a portion of the direct costs of the project). If the application institution is claiming indirect costs and has a current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement, include on the budget form the following information: a) the indirect-cost rate; b) the federal agency with which the agreement was negotiated; and c) the date of the agreement.

Organizations that wish to include overhead charges in the budget but do not have a current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate or have not submitted a

pending indirect-cost proposal to a federal agency may choose one of the following options:

1. NEH will not require the formal negotiation of an indirect-cost rate, provided that the charge for indirect costs does not exceed the government-wide rate of up to 10 percent of direct costs, less distorting items (including, but not limited to, capital expenditures, participant stipends, fellowships, and the portion of each individual subgrant or subcontract in excess of \$25,000). This option is not available to a sponsorship or umbrella organization—that is, an organization that applies for a grant on behalf of an organization that may not be eligible to apply directly to NEH for a grant. Applicants choosing this option should understand that they must maintain documentation to support overhead charges claimed as part of project costs.
2. If your organization wishes to use a rate higher than 10 percent, provide on the budget form an estimate of the indirect-cost rate and the charges. If the application is approved for funding, the award document will provide instructions on how to negotiate an indirect-cost rate with NEH.

☐ 7) Images and links to other assets (not required)

You may include images, production art, and other audiovisual assets with your application:

- Items that cannot be submitted as PDFs to Grants.gov should be sent on disk directly to the program or, in the case of audio or video, as URLs embedded within the application.
- Include in this attachment a list of media assets with short descriptions.

☐ 8) Design document

All Prototyping applications must include a design document. Separate instructions for creating the design document can be found [here](#) (PDF).